

Advisors Give High Marks to PPI in Investment Executive's Report Card

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Advisors rated their firm's/MGA's ethics as the attribute that matters most to them in *Investment Executive's 2011 Insurance Advisors' Report Card*. It's no coincidence that PPI Advisory and PPI Solutions, both part of the PPI family, shared the overall top distinction in that category, among insurance-related distribution organizations across Canada.

"Being a trusted partner is at the heart of who we are at PPI," says Jim Burton, Chairman and CEO of PPI. "Advisors surveyed have embraced the operating model we adopted for the PPI family of companies in 2010. PPI Advisory continues to specialize in the high net-worth marketplace, with concierge service and industry leading tax and estate planning expertise. PPI Solutions covers the broader market across Canada, guaranteeing efficient, effective and friendly local service, proprietary tools and strong carrier relationships," he adds.

The IE researchers spoke with 399 insurance advisors at ten national organizations, and asked them to rate their firm's performance in specific categories and to rank the importance of each category to their business.

TOP RANKINGS

PPI Advisory's rating increased in 18 of the 25 categories in which it was ranked, ranking first in five categories and achieving an overall rating of 9.1 out of 10, well ahead of the group's overall average performance of 8.7. PPI Solutions ranked first in 14 categories, with an overall rating of 9.7 out of 10, first among ten insurance distributors. Combined, PPI Advisory and PPI Solutions dominated the top rankings in the survey!

In addition, PPI Solutions and PPI Advisory were top performers among 44 firms surveyed in Investment Executive's four special reports on Insurance Advisors, Brokers, Dealers and Banks/Credit Unions, placing 2nd and 6th, respectively.

"Our emphasis is on delivering the best insurance products, tools, support and technical expertise," says Yves Bergeron, President, PPI Advisory. "We want to exceed our Associates' expectations, helping them continue to build their clients' trust, and in turn, earn more of their business."

"The secret of PPI Solution's success is that it has built a communications pipeline between the advisors and their local back offices," says PPI Solutions' President and CEO Jim Virtue in the Report. "We have dedicated staff assigned to our advisors so they're always dealing with the same people on both their new business and policy-owner service."

MARKETING SUPPORT

"In terms of marketing support, Toronto-based PPI Advisory outshone its peers," wrote Sanam Islam at Investment Executive. "As well as tying for tops in the category, its rating increased to 8.9 from 8.2 in 2010." Overall, advisors ranked marketing support as being more important to their business than in previous years.

Speaking about PPI Advisory, an Associate in Quebec was quoted in the report saying "They focus on distinguishing the capabilities of the advisor. They help me with [preparing] presentations and seminars." The Report Card highlights the software, personalized support and expertise from accountants, lawyers, actuaries and underwriters that PPI Advisory delivers.

BACK-OFFICE AND TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

PPI Solutions was rated highest in In-force services and Compensation support, with one advisor saying, "Follow-up phone calls and emails are phenomenal. They're all returned within a half an hour."

The Report Card commends “PPI Advisory’s proactive approach in keeping advisors informed and helping them solve issues [that] has paid off – the firm’s ratings increased in all three back-office categories.”

ADVISORS IN FAVOUR OF MGA REGULATION

Almost two-thirds of advisors are in favour of MGA regulation, an area where PPI has been a strong advocate, believing it will benefit both advisors and clients. “PPI takes its industry commitments very seriously,” says Jim Burton, “and we

continue to be actively involved in thought leadership in the areas of government and regulatory relations.”

Overall, advisors surveyed are focusing on their core insurance business, which is in keeping with PPI’s philosophy. According to Jim Burton, “Our emphasis is on insurance, and we will continue to deliver best practices, exceptional service and industry leading innovation to help advisors serve their clients best.”

As one advisor put it in the Report Card, “They have genuine concern for [the] viability [of] my business, and there is trust there.”

2011 Insurance Advisors’ Report Card

How Advisors Rated Their Firms

	DEDICATED SALES AGENCIES			INDEPENDENT SALES AGENCIES								Perform. average	Imp. average
	Freedom 55 Financial	RBC Life Insurance	Sun Life Financial	Daystar Financial	Great-West Life	Hub Financial	IDC WIN	PPI Advisory	PPI Solutions*	World Fin’l Grp.			
Firm’s/MGA’s total compensation	7.3	6.9	8.1	8.5	7.8	8.6	9.5	8.1	9.6	8.8	8.3	8.8	
Technology tools & advisor desktop	7.2	7.3	8.4	7.2	6.2	7.2	9.0	8.7	9.3	8.6	7.9	8.7	
Support for mobile technology & the mobile advisor	7.7	6.7	7.7	N/C	N/A	N/A	N/C	7.6	N/C	8.2	7.6	7.9	
Back office & administrative support for:													
New business: support for application processing	7.6	6.6	8.0	8.4	7.8	8.4	9.4	9.2	9.3	8.9	8.4	9.3	
In-force services: dividend & interest posting, trade reconcil.	8.1	8.1	8.2	8.3	7.7	8.0	8.8	8.7	9.3	8.8	8.4	9.0	
Compensation support: payroll & benefits	7.8	8.1	8.5	8.8	8.1	8.7	9.3	9.1	9.4	8.8	8.7	9.1	
Consumer website	6.6	8.0	8.3		7.6						7.7	7.9	
Firm’s consumer advertising	5.7	7.2	8.5								7.1	8.5	
Firm’s marketing support for advisor’s practice	6.9	7.6	7.4	7.4	7.5	7.5	8.9	8.9	8.7	8.5	7.9	8.4	
Client account statements	7.3	7.8	7.8		7.5						7.6	8.8	
Online account access for clients	7.1	N/A	8.3	N/A	7.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	8.6	N/A	7.9	8.3	
Ongoing training	8.1	7.3	8.2	8.0	6.9	8.4	9.6	9.3	9.5	9.5	8.5	8.7	
Your branch mgr./MGA’s sales director or regional sales mgr.	7.8	7.8	7.6	9.1	7.8	8.9	9.5	9.4	9.5	9.1	8.7	8.7	
Products & support for high net-worth clients	7.6	7.2	8.3	8.0	7.5	7.7	8.8	9.5	8.8	8.5	8.2	8.6	
Support for wills and estate planning	7.1	7.3	8.4	7.9	7.5	N/A	8.5	9.3	8.5	N/A	8.1	8.2	
Support for tax planning	6.7	6.5	7.8	N/A	7.4	N/A	8.9	9.6	8.7	N/A	7.9	8.3	
Support for insurance planning	7.8	7.9	8.4	8.4	7.7	8.3	9.3	9.1	9.2	9.0	8.5	8.8	
Support for helping clients accumulate assets for retirement	7.6	7.2	8.1	7.0	7.4	N/A	9.1	N/A	8.4	8.9	8.0	8.5	
Support for helping clients plan for post-retirement income	7.9	7.6	8.3	7.4	7.3	N/A	8.9	N/A	8.6	8.5	8.1	8.5	
Support for developing a financial plan for clients	7.5	6.7	8.3	N/C	6.4	N/C	9.1	N/C	N/A	9.0	7.8	8.4	
Support for dealing with changes in the regulatory enviro.	7.8	8.7	8.5	7.3	7.2	7.9	9.0	8.7	9.2	9.0	8.3	8.5	
Firm’s/MGA’s succession/retirement program for advisors	7.2	N/A	8.7	N/A	8.0	6.4	N/A	N/A	N/A	9.1	7.9	8.9	
Bringing new investment products to market	7.3	N/C	8.0		7.0						7.4	8.4	
MGA’s help in positioning a product				7.8		8.4	9.1	9.0	9.2	9.1	8.8	8.7	
Firm’s/MGA’s due-diligence process for new products	8.7	8.0	9.0	8.4	8.5	8.6	9.1	9.1	9.3	9.4	8.8	8.9	
Quality of firm’s/MGA’s product offering	8.4	8.1	8.7	9.0	8.2	8.8	9.8	9.1	9.6	9.1	8.9	9.2	
Firm’s/MGA’s stability	9.5	9.2	9.7	8.6	9.3	9.0	9.7	9.1	9.8	9.8	9.4	9.5	
Firm’s/MGA’s strategic focus	8.1	8.1	8.7	8.5	7.7	8.1	9.5	9.0	9.5	9.6	8.7	8.7	
Firm’s corporate culture	7.3	7.9	8.3		7.3						7.7	8.4	
Firm’s diversity & inclusion strategy	8.5	8.7	9.2	8.6	8.6	8.9	9.3	9.0	9.7	9.9	9.0	8.3	
Firm’s image with the public	8.3	9.0	9.3		8.4						8.7	9.3	
Firm’s/MGA’s ethics	9.0	9.0	9.3	9.1	8.9	9.3	9.7	9.8	9.8	9.7	9.4	9.6	
Advisor’s relationship with compliance department	8.6	8.9	9.2		8.4						8.8	8.7	
MGA’s risk-management decisions				8.8		8.6	9.4	9.3	9.4	9.3	9.1	9.4	
MGA’s regulatory compliance on the insurance side				8.3		8.8	9.6	9.3	9.6	9.2	9.1	9.2	
Freedom to make objective product choices for clients	8.6	8.7	8.8	9.4	9.4	9.6	9.8	9.7	9.9	9.5	9.3	9.6	
Firm’s/MGA’s delivery on promises	8.1	7.3	8.1	8.9	8.4	8.8	9.7	8.7	9.8	9.2	8.7	9.4	
IE RATING (AVERAGE OF ALL CATEGORIES)	7.7	7.8	8.4	8.3	7.8	8.4	9.3	9.0	9.3	9.1	8.5		
Overall rating by advisors	8.0	8.0	8.6	8.6	8.1	8.5	9.6	9.1	9.7	9.2	8.7		

*PPI SOLUTIONS IS 50% OWNED BY PPI (FORMERLY PPI FINANCIAL GROUP INC.) AND OPERATES AS AN INDEPENDENT COMPANY FROM ITS SISTER FIRM, PPI ADVISORY
TWO SEPARATE SURVEYS WERE USED TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH: ONE FOR DEDICATED SALES AGENTS AND THE INDEPENDENT AGENTS WITH GREAT-WEST LIFE; ONE FOR THE INDEPENDENT SALES AGENTS WITH THE MGAs. BLANK SPACES INDICATE THAT THE QUESTION WAS NOT ASKED OF THOSE FIRMS
ALL SCORES ARE BASED ON A SCALE OF 0 TO 10. A **BOLD** NUMBER INDICATES THE COMPANY PLACED FIRST IN THAT CATEGORY IN THE REPORT CARD. COMPANIES CAN BE TIED. NO EXTRA POINTS ARE AWARDED FOR A FIRST-PLACE POSITION. NUMBERS IN **GREEN** INDICATE A SCORE HAS INCREASED BY AT LEAST 0.5 OF A POINT FROM LAST YEAR. NUMBERS IN **RED** INDICATE A SCORE HAS DECREASED BY AT LEAST 0.5 OF A POINT FROM LAST YEAR
THE “PERFORMANCE AVERAGE” TALLIES ALL THE SCORES IN A GIVEN CATEGORY AND AVERAGES THEM TOGETHER. YOU CAN CHECK TO SEE IF A COMPANY IS ABOVE OR BELOW THE AVERAGE
THE “IMPORTANCE AVERAGE” TALLIES ALL THE IMPORTANCE SCORES IN A GIVEN CATEGORY AND AVERAGES THEM TOGETHER. IT IS INTENDED TO MEASURE HOW IMPORTANT ADVISORS THINK A REPORT CARD CATEGORY IS TO THEIR BUSINESS
THE “IE RATING” IS AN AVERAGE OF ALL OF A COMPANY’S CATEGORY SCORES, EXCLUDING THE “OVERALL RATING BY ADVISORS”
THE “OVERALL RATING BY ADVISORS” IS THE RATING ADVISORS GAVE THEIR FIRM AS A WHOLE
N/A MEANS A CATEGORY DOES NOT APPLY TO A COMPANY; N/C MEANS THE CATEGORY IS NOT CALCULABLE BECAUSE NOT ENOUGH ADVISORS RATED IT TO BE A REASONABLE SAMPLE

SOURCE: INVESTMENT EXECUTIVE RESEARCH

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